

As Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Emergency Preparedness, Response and Communications, Gus held a hearing on Thursday to examine the Department of Homeland Security's preparedness related to health issues. The witness was Dr. Alexander Garza, Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs and Chief Medical Officer with DHS.

This hearing provided Subcommittee members with an opportunity to question Dr. Garza about DHS's medical preparedness and response efforts, including responding to a chemical or biological attack. In the hearing, Gus asked about plans for the BioWatch and NBIC programs going forward.

Given the tragic events taking place in Japan and one of its nuclear plants, Gus also asked about the response and preparedness efforts in place should such an incident occur in the U.S.

"While this hearing has been scheduled for some time, it is particularly timely in light of the recent catastrophe in Japan. Our thoughts are with the Japanese people as they continue to respond to this tragedy and begin to recover. Of course, the United States stands ready to assist our ally in this difficult time," Gus said in his opening statement. "As we work to assist Japan, we must also reflect on our own level of preparedness should we ever experience a similar event in the United States. The Office of Health Affairs' mission is to provide health and medical expertise in support of the Department's mission to prepare for, respond to, and recover from all hazards impacting the nation's security. That is, to protect our health in the case of a national incident with health consequences."

Watch Gus' entire opening statement below:

Gus in the News:

[Bloomberg: Japan's Nuclear Risk Revives Iodide Supply Debate in U.S.](#)

[Homeland Security Today: Japanese Nuclear Disaster Raises Questions of US Preparedness](#)

[Sunshine State News: Praising Rick Scott, Gus Bilirakis Urges States to Review Responses to Nuclear Emergencies](#)

